

# WHITE SLAVES OF THE PARLOR.

## New York Women Who Are Leading a Revolution Which May Settle the Servant Question Once and for All.

By Mrs. Dr. Leo Rosenberg,  
President of the German Housewives Society.

**W**HAT is the "German Housewives Society?" It is a new and successful solution of the most important problems that the women of the present day have to content with, namely, How to get a good servant; how to keep her, and how to make her happy. The last is by no means the least, for if the servant is miserable the family is miserable, and a break is bound to follow.

The Housewives Society is entirely one of mutual benefit. There is no desire to make money beyond expenses and the fees are all met by the employers, who already number over three hundred. We have achieved excellent results and achieved them in the following manner. When a girl applies at the society

### RIGHTS GUARANTEED TO MISTRESS AND SERVANT BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CLUB.

Section 1. The German Housewives Society was organized in order to guard the interests of the Employer as well as of the Employee, and shall henceforth and legally continue in due form.

Sec. 15. Servants who have been placed in positions through this society will receive assistance in case of need from the funds of this society as far as practicable. In case of sickness they will receive free medical aid and medicines at the society physician's office as long as they cannot be placed in a hospital, provided, however, the servant is already in the employ of a member for four successive weeks, and has contracted a sickness during this time.

Sec. 16. Servants will receive from the society's funds the following premiums:

On ten years' uninterrupted service with a member of this society, \$100; five years' service, \$45; three years' service, \$30; two years' service, \$20.

These premiums will be paid immediately upon leaving such position.

Sec. 20. Obstinate servants or those who wilfully neglect their duties and by their conduct give cause to their employer's well-founded complaint will not be recommended again by the society when relapsing into the same faults, besides losing all privileges.

Sec. 21. Members who, by unjust treatment of servants supplied to them, do not rectify their conduct, or at least justify the same, will be expelled from the society.

one of our girls shows signs of discontent, some one of the society makes a point of visiting her, getting at the cause of the difficulty, and in nine times out of ten righting the trouble and bringing about a kindly feeling between mistress and maid. Indeed, that is our chief aim, to bring employer and employe into sympathy with each other.

Here is a letter that came in from one of our girls the other day, showing our success in this direction:

"Dear Madam: My mistress is going to Europe. What shall I do? I like my place and am working for a premium. Do I lose my five months here? I want to return here in the Fall."

Another way in which we make the girls feel our interest and sympathy is by giving them medicine and medical attendance free of charge. A maid who is too ill to call at the doctor's office sends word to the society, and receives the best attention at her own home. If she has to go to a hospital, her mistress arranges for her, and her place is kept for her recovery, and the time lost does not count against her premium.

As soon as we are thoroughly established and our bank account is large enough we mean to give a series of entertainments for the girls employed by members of the society. I do not mean a lot of stupid lectures, or lessons, or sermons. I mean balls and theatre parties, and just the sort of amusements merry, happy, healthy women crave and have a right to.

Another plan is to establish cooking schools, where lessons will be given free of charge to any girl who has won a premium. For instance, a girl who has served two years as a waitress or chambermaid or nurse, and has received her prize of \$20 will be entitled to a course in the cooking school without charge. As a woman could earn much higher wages with a diploma from a cooking school, vacancies in this training department will be much sought after.

Application for servants from our society come in from all over the country, and, of course, we send out girls; but it is my earnest desire that other cities should establish branches, as the society at No. 107 East Fifty-ninth street is really pressed to meet the demands of New York members. And by the way, it is necessary to become a member in order to apply for a servant.

The direct benefits which accrue to mistress and maid in our society are these: Every mistress is sure that her servant comes to her with a kindly feeling, and is honest, respectable and anxious to stay.

Every maid knows that her mistress is waiting to receive her with sympathy and appreciation; that she will get help instead of criticism, and a prize and diploma for faithful service. This is our solution of the problem.



Mrs. Leo Rosenberg

for work, and over seventeen hundred have done so since September, 1896, our only demand is a reference that will bear investigation. We find out the line of work the girl can do best and send her to a place where there is a demand for that kind of work, so that she starts with everything in her favor.

Sometimes a girl will come to us and say: "I am a good laundress; I can sweep and dust, but cannot cook very well. But I want to learn, and will do my best." When we send her out we ask her mistress to be patient with her and to help rather than criticize at first. Such a girl recently wrote to the society: "I like my place. My mistress is good and I think I can keep my place if you will only be so good as to send me a recipe for pie crust and biscuits." The recipes were sent. The girl still has her place and is working hard for a "premium."

That reminds me that I have not told you about our system of premiums. All our surplus money is used in a series of premiums or prizes for our servants. We explain it to our applicants in these words: "Every college, every university, sewing school or industrial school offer prizes for their best student, their most industrious workers, and every pupil strives to win a prize, not only for its value, but for the honor. We see no reason why prizes should not be given to our best servants, so that a good worker has the benefit of the money as well as the honor and the note which accompanies the money as an invaluable reference. Girls who have been in one place for two years receive a premium of \$20 in cash. For three years of uninterrupted service the reward is \$30; for five years \$45, and for ten years \$100. These prizes are not large, but quite sufficient to spur ambitious girls to do good work and strive to retain their places. Why, only yesterday I overheard my own maid say: 'I'm on the road to a premium. I'm here six months now, that makes only eighteen more, when I'm in for \$20 cash sure and a good reference in the bargain.'"

An ordinary intelligence office will try to win a girl away from a good place in order to get another place for her and another fee for themselves. While if



AS IT WILL BE

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